

## **Perceived and Preferred Teaching Styles (Methods) of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) Students**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study aims to identify the dominant teaching styles of the English Language lecturers as perceived by the students. This study also investigates the perception and preference of the students with respect to their English language lecturers' teaching styles. Comparisons were made between (i) male and female students' perceptions with respect to their lecturers' teaching styles (ii) male and female students' preferences with respect to their lecturers' teaching styles and (iii) the students' perceptions and preferences with respect to their lecturers' teaching styles. The teaching styles mentioned are based upon Grasha's Model (1996) consisting of Expert style, Formal Authority style, Personal Model style, Facilitator style and Delegator style. This study is a survey method using 5-point Likert Scale questionnaire as the instrument to collect data. The data collected was analysed using SPSS version 13.0. Simple random sampling was employed in this study. The samples were 175 semester 5 students from the three Engineering Departments of Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah Polytechnic, Shah Alam, Selangor. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean and deviation were used to describe the respondents' profile and, perceptions and preferences with respect to their lecturers' teaching styles. Meanwhile, t-tests were used to analyse the differences between (i) gender with respect to the lecturers' teaching styles, and (ii) perceived and preferred teaching styles. The results of the study showed that the three most dominant teaching styles of the lecturers perceived by the students were Expert, followed by Personal Model and then Delegator. It was also found that the students' most preferred teaching style was Facilitator style while Formal Authority style being the least preferred. In terms of gender, there was no significant difference in perceptions as well as preferences between the male and female students in any of the mean scores of all teaching styles. The students' perceptions and preferences differed significantly in all teaching styles of the Grasha's Model (1996) except for Expert teaching style. The results demonstrated statistically significant higher scores in terms of preferences to Formal Authority, Personal Model, Facilitator and Delegator styles. There was no significant difference between the students' perceptions as well as preferences for Expert teaching style.

*Keywords: Dominant, Perceived, Preferred, Teaching Styles, ESP*

### **ABSTRAK**

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengenalpasti gaya pengajaran dominan di kalangan pensyarah Bahasa Inggeris. Ia memberi perhatian kepada sudut pandangan/tanggapan (*perception*) pelajar, dan keutamaan/keinginan (*preference*) pelajar. Kajian ini juga membuat perbandingan antara (i) gaya pengajaran pensyarah daripada sudut pandangan pelajar lelaki dan perempuan,

(ii) gaya pengajaran pensyarah yang diinginkan oleh pelajar lelaki dan perempuan, dan (iii) gaya pengajaran yang ditanggap dan yang diinginkan oleh pelajar. Gaya pengajaran yang digunakan dalam kajian ini adalah berdasarkan Model Grasha (1996) yang terdiri daripada gaya *Expert*, gaya *Formal Authority*, gaya *Personal Model*, gaya *Facilitator* dan gaya *Delegator*. Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah tinjauan melalui soal-selidik. Persampelan rawak mudah telah digunakan di mana 175 pelajar semester 5 dari tiga Jabatan Kejuruteraan Politeknik Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah, Shah Alam, Selangor, telah mengambil bahagian dalam kajian ini. Data kajian dikutip melalui borang soal selidik yang menggunakan Skala Likert 5-poin. Data kajian dianalisis menggunakan perisian SPSS versi 13.0. Statistik deskriptif dibentangkan dalam bentuk frekuensi, peratus, min dan sisihan piawai untuk melihat taburan profil responden, tanggapan, dan keutamaan pelajar terhadap gaya pengajaran pensyarah. Manakala ujian-t digunakan untuk menganalisis perbezaan antara (i) jantina terhadap gaya pengajaran pensyarah, dan (ii) tanggapan dan keutamaan pelajar terhadap gaya pengajaran pensyarah. Hasil kajian mendapati tiga gaya pengajaran pensyarah yang paling dominan adalah gaya *Expert*, diikuti oleh gaya *Personal Model* dan gaya *Delegator*. Didapati juga bahawa gaya pengajaran pensyarah yang paling diinginkan oleh pelajar adalah gaya *Facilitator* manakala gaya *Formal Authority* adalah gaya yang paling tidak diinginkan. Tidak terdapat perbezaan yang signifikan antara pelajar lelaki dan pelajar perempuan bagi semua gaya pengajaran yang dilihat dan juga gaya pengajaran yang diinginkan. Terdapat perbezaan yang signifikan antara gaya pengajaran yang dilihat dan gaya pengajaran yang diinginkan oleh pelajar bagi semua gaya pengajaran kecuali gaya pengajaran *Expert*. Hasil kajian menunjukkan min gaya pengajaran yang diinginkan adalah lebih tinggi bagi gaya *Formal Authority*, *Personal Model*, *Facilitator* dan *Delegator*, berbanding dengan gaya pengajaran yang ditanggapi. Manakala bagi gaya pengajaran *Expert*, tidak terdapat perbezaan yang signifikan antara gaya pengajaran yang ditanggapi dan yang diinginkan.

*Kata kunci: Dominan, Dilihat, Diingini, Gaya Pengajaran, Bahasa Inggeris untuk Tujuan Tertentu*

## Introduction

The general objective of the English Language program in polytechnics under the auspices of the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), Malaysia, is to equip students with necessary skills in academic and technical contexts so that they are able to perform in the industries. The English language program in MOHE polytechnics is currently divided into 6 modules. Each module is assigned to each semester. The General Studies Department (JPAM) is a service or support department providing English language courses as well as Islamic and Moral education courses for the students from the four departments: Electrical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Mechanical Engineering and Commerce.

The technical students have two hours of English classes weekly. Only one hour is spent in the language laboratory (lab) while the other hour is conducted in the normal classroom. The commerce students, however, have one hour for lecture in the classroom and two hours for lab period. Every one of these language labs is equipped with either the conventional audio-visual or the interactive multimedia equipment.

It is only natural to expect the variation of teaching styles of lecturers teaching in the classroom and the language lab. It is important to know if the polytechnic English language lecturers vary their teaching styles to suit the different settings/nature of the class. If the lecturers use a variety of teaching methods and styles, the students are exposed to both familiar and unfamiliar ways of learning that provide both comfort and tension during the process, ultimately giving learners multiple ways to excel (Vaughn & Baker, 2001). This study on teaching styles is to improve the proficiency level of the polytechnic students that was reported to be on the low side (Ministry of Education 2003).

### **Statement of the Problem**

There are a lot of debates on why the English language proficiency level of the polytechnic students is so low. The then Ministry of Education (now MOHE) had in the past attempted to find the probable cause for the problem. In 1994, the Polytechnic English language syllabus underwent a radical change when a major review of the syllabus was conducted on a large-scale basis. A needs analysis involving employers, polytechnic graduates and students co-operated and assisted to accumulate data for the study. The new syllabus formulated from the needs analysis was then implemented in the polytechnics. Five years later in 1999, a study called *Polytechnic Development Project - Employer Study* was conducted where inputs were taken from employers of polytechnic graduates. The findings revealed that polytechnic graduates' performances were not up to the employers' expectations in terms of their communication skills which include Bahasa Malaysia as well as English language despite the curriculum change earlier on. Then, in 2003, the Planning and Research Division, Technical Education Department, Ministry of Education, Malaysia, conducted a study on final semester polytechnic students' English language proficiency. The results from the study entitled *Research Studies on Polytechnics* (Ministry of Education 2003) showed that the proficiency level of polytechnic students was generally low both for Certificate (2.87) and Diploma (2.9) students on the scale from 1 to 5. What could be the problem for the deteriorating dilemma of English language in the polytechnics? The initial measures were geared towards the right direction where the curriculum was developed based on employers' (which represent the industries) inputs. The English language syllabuses (English for Technical and Commercial Purposes) have since been implemented according to what the industries dictated in the needs analysis in 1994. Hence, what else could be wrong?

If MOHE had so far looked at the curriculum to find the remedy for the problem, the researchers therefore would like to offer a probable solution by looking at the curriculum

delivery which in this particular case refers to what goes on in the classroom itself, hence the teaching style adopted by the lecturers as well as the teaching style preferred by the students. In the classroom, where the lecturer and the students interact is also where the teaching and learning takes place. Teaching and learning is just as important as having a good curriculum. The lecturer is also an important part of an educational system. Each lecturer is unique in many ways. The lecturers vary from one another in such characteristic as the tendency to use a certain teaching style in their teaching. According to Gregorc (1979), teaching style is more than a methodology. He added that teaching style places subjective demands upon the learner who may or may not have abilities to match such demands. Felder & Henriques (1995) also stated that how much a given student learns in a class is governed in part by that student's native ability and prior preparation but also by the compatibility of his or her characteristic approach to learning and the instructor's characteristic approach to teaching.

Many studies conducted by local and foreign researchers focused on dominant teaching styles adopted by the teachers, instructors or lecturers at schools or higher institutions. Numerous studies also were carried out to find the match or mismatch between teachers' teaching styles and students' learning styles. There are several foreign studies that relate students' preferences for teaching styles with student characteristics and learning and grade orientations, and enhancing students' growth.

This study however, investigated what goes on in the classroom by looking at the teaching styles employed by the English language lecturers and compared it to the teaching styles preferred by the polytechnic students. This study not only determined the dominant teaching style of the English language lecturers but also the students' preferred teaching styles. Furthermore, this study sought to find the differences between the male and female students' perceptions as well as preferences with respect to their lecturers' teaching styles. Finally, this study investigated the difference between the teaching styles that the students perceived in the classroom and the teaching styles that they preferred. From the findings of this study, the researchers would suggest some remedial measures for the Ministry of Higher Education as well as the polytechnic English language lecturers in improving the standard of English language among polytechnic students. Understanding which styles certain types of students prefer, can help educators adjust their approach to best meet the needs of their students (Richardson and Kring 1997). Educators in this context include not only the lecturers but the parent institution as well, none other than the Ministry of Higher Education.

### Purpose

Students' communicative ability is significant to enable them to adapt well with the real working environment. This aspect is vital to promote their marketability in the ever challenging industrial realm. This study looks at students' perspectives of their lecturer's teaching style. Wittrock (1986) revealed that research on students' thinking promises to enhance understanding of teaching and its outcomes by providing information about teaching as experienced by the learners. This is the functional instruction that influences students' learning and achievement. Learners' perception on how and what the teachers teach could provide guidance for teachers to improve their teaching. Therefore, this study seeks to determine English for Specific Purposes (ESP) students' perceptions and preferences of their lecturers' teaching styles. The other purpose of this study is to analyze: (a) the differences between male and female ESP students' perceptions as well as preference of their lecturers' teaching styles, and (b) the differences between the ESP students' perceived and preferred teaching styles of their English language lecturers.

### Research Objectives

In order to achieve the aims of this study, the investigator intends to determine:

- i. The students' perceptions of their lecturer's teaching styles.
- ii. The students' preferences to their lecturer's teaching styles.
- iii. The difference between the **male and female** students' **perceptions** with respect to their lecturer's teaching styles in terms of Expert, Formal Authority, Personal Model, Delegator and Facilitator Styles.
- iv. The difference between the **male and female** students' **preferences** with respect to their lecturer's teaching styles in terms of Expert, Formal Authority, Personal Model, Delegator and Facilitator Styles.
- vi. The difference between the students' **perceptions** and **preferences** with respect to their lecturer's teaching styles in terms of Expert, Formal Authority, Personal Model, Delegator and Facilitator Styles.

### **Research Questions**

In this research, there are several questions that the investigator would like to focus on:

- i. What are the students' perceptions of their lecturers' teaching styles?
- ii. What are the students' preferences with respect to their lecturers' teaching styles?
- iii. Is there a significant difference between the male and female students' perceptions with respect to their lecturers' teaching styles?
- iv. Is there a significant difference between the male and female students' preference with respect to their lecturers' teaching styles?
- v. Is there a significant difference between the students' perceptions and preferences with respect to their lecturers' teaching styles in terms of Expert, Formal Authority, Personal Model, Facilitator Style, and Delegator Styles?

### **Conceptual Framework**

Since this study investigates teaching styles, to see how students perceive their teachers' teaching, the model of the study is taken from Grasha (1996) in which the questionnaire is designed specifically to evaluate the lecturers' teaching styles. This study is particularly interested in the ESP students' perceptions and preferences of their lecturers' teaching styles. The conceptual framework of the study is displayed in Figure 1.

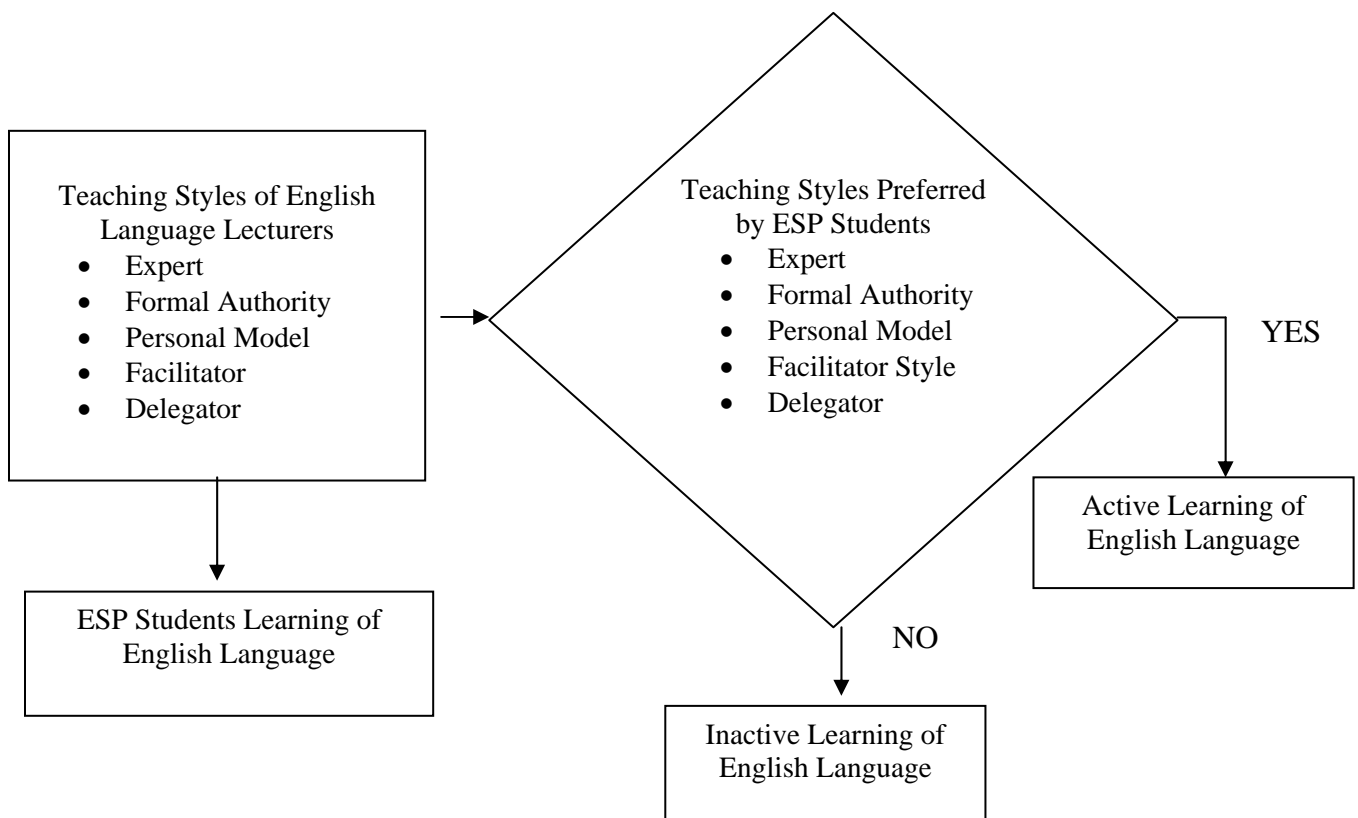


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Based on Figure 1, the lecturers' teaching styles in the process of teaching and learning determine the students' learning. At this juncture, the question is, are the lecturers' teaching styles what the students prefer? If the teaching styles of the lecturers are parallel with the teaching styles preferred by the students, then the students will be actively involved in the English language learning. However, if the teaching styles of the lecturers are not parallel with the teaching styles preferred by the students, then the students will not be actively involved in the English language learning. Nonetheless, there are other factors that affect the teaching and learning of English language like students' learning styles, allocation and constraint of time, and examination which are not investigated in this study.

### Significance of the Study

The focus of this study is on the students' perceptions and preferences with respect to their English Language lecturers' teaching styles in Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah Polytechnic. The significance of this study lies in the fact that the data collected can be analysed and interpreted in terms of looking at the orientation of the polytechnic English language lecturers' teaching styles as perceived and preferred by the students in order to



promote effective English Language learning. The English language lecturers in the polytechnic can translate the information derived from the results of this study into effective planning and implementation of English language lessons. The results of this study are also hoped to provide information to the Ministry of Higher Education in terms of professional or staff development planning.

## **Operational Definitions**

### **Teaching Style**

According to Cook (1991), a teaching style is a loosely connected set of teaching techniques believed to share the same goals of language learning and the same views language and of L2 (second language) learning. Cook (1991) described the word 'style' as referring to the element of fashion and changeability in teaching. Style also reflects what Sternberg (1997) describes as our preferred ways of using the abilities that we have. Meanwhile, Reinsmith (1992; 1994) describes teaching style as the teacher's presence and the nature and quality of our encounter with students. Conti and Welborn (1986) describe teaching style as a label associated with various identifiable sets of classroom teaching behaviours, which are consistent even though the content that is being taught may change. According to Grasha (1996), teaching style is viewed as a particular pattern of needs, beliefs, and behaviours that teachers display in the classroom. He also states that style is multidimensional and affect how teachers present information, interact with students, manage classroom tasks, supervise coursework, socialize students to the field, and mentor students. In this study, teaching style refers to the five teaching styles of Grasha's Teaching Style Model (1996) namely the Expert Style, Formal Authority Style, Personal Model Style, Facilitator Style, and Delegator Style.

### **Perceived and Preferred**

Entwistle (in Hativa and Birenbaum 2000) suggests that knowing students' perceptions of, and preferences for their academic environment, particularly those related to teaching characteristics, can aid instructors in selecting appropriate teaching strategies and structuring the academic environment to better serve students' needs in learning. In this study, 'perceive' refers to how the students of Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah Polytechnic regard their English Language lecturers' teaching styles. Meanwhile, 'preferred' refers to the teaching styles that these students like or would like their teachers to teach them in class.



## Literature Review

Little had been written about teaching styles as compared to learning styles. Researchers and writers tended to describe teaching styles relevant to their own field of study. These teaching styles are categorized into various approaches, for example: *Intellectual Excitement-Interpersonal Rapport* (Lowman 1995), *Formal-Informal* (Bennett 1976), *Open-Traditional* (Solomon & Kendall 1979), and *Role Models* (Grasha 1996).

Lowman (1995; 1984) developed the two-dimensional model of *Intellectual Excitement & Interpersonal Rapport* that constitute nine combinations or cells, each representing a unique style of instruction associated with a particular probability that students will learn to their fullest. Lowman cautioned that these nine styles are generalisations and will not describe every teacher exactly; individual instructor may show elements of more than one type.

Attempts to describe teaching styles in terms of formal/traditional and informal/open/progressive were done by Bennett (1976) and Solomon & Kendall (1979). Bennett identified seven most distinctive patterns in the classroom while Solomon & Kendall discovered 6. There are distinct similarities between the two studies. These classrooms were classified into three categories - formal, mixed and informal. Bennett found that pupils taught by formal methods showed marked improvement in basic skills while children in informal classes showed improving levels of motivation but also increased anxiety. Solomon & Kendall discovered very similar findings that the highest levels of achievement were found in the two types of class identified as controlled and disciplined, and the lowest level of performance in the classes which were permissive and uncontrolled.

Grasha (1996) identified five teaching styles in his teaching style models based on what he regarded as metaphors of role models. The five styles are Expert, Formal Authority, Personal Model, Facilitator and Delegator Styles. Although it may seem appropriate to place teachers into one of the five categories of teaching styles, Grasha (1996) emphasised that everyone who teaches possesses each of the five teaching styles to varying degrees. Therefore, he identified the four clusters of teaching styles that are dominant among teachers. These clusters are Cluster 1 (expert/formal authority style), Cluster 2 (personal model/expert/ formal authority style), Cluster 3 (facilitator/personal model/expert style), and Cluster 4 (delegator/facilitator/ expert style). According to Grasha (1996), each cluster of teaching style conveys a distinguished message to the students, and this helps to create the *mood* of the class.

Researches on teaching styles do not come in a standardised and uniformly labeled package. From the literature review, it was found that different researchers and authors used

different terminologies to describe teaching styles depending on the research or study at hand. Consistencies in the literature on teaching styles lie in the fact that every teacher is unique and has the tendency to use a certain style of teaching. The findings in the literature indicated a strong preference for certain teaching styles on behalf of the students due to factors such as educational goals, grades, gender, and ethnicity. Findings in the literature also demonstrated a mix of positive and negative outcomes in matched/mismatched between the teaching styles of the lecturers and learning styles of the students. Therefore, researches on teaching styles should be given due attention and priority since they play a significant role in the delivery of the curriculum in an educational institution.

### **Methodology**

Clustered simple random sampling was employed in this study. The samples were 175 Semester 5 students from three Engineering Departments of Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah Polytechnic, Shah Alam, Selangor. The sample size was determined based on the table presented by Krejcie & Morgan (1970). Questionnaire was used to collect the data for the current study where answers were given in five-point Likert scale ranging from 1- Strongly Disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Quite Disagree, 4 – Agree and 5 Strongly Agree. The items in the questionnaire were adapted from Grasha's Teaching Style Inventory (1996). The adaptations were made to the questionnaire to obtain the information on perceived and preferred teaching styles of the English Language lecturers from the students' perspective. The respondents' background information such as gender, department and language used at home was collected and then presented in tables and percentages.

A pilot study was conducted to determine the suitability, validity and reliability of the items in the questionnaire. In the present study, the Cronbach alpha coefficient was 0.882 in Section B and 0.876 in Section C indicating a good internal consistency. The obtained research data was processed using SPSS 13.0. Data analyses included descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics were presented using frequencies and percentages while T-tests were used to test the hypotheses.

Items in section B are meant to identify lecturers' teaching styles from the students' perspectives. The items were constructed using five-point Likert Scale. All of the items in the questionnaire were taken from Grasha's Teaching Style Inventory (1996). Adaptations were made to the Inventory where only 4 out of 8 items were taken from each of the teaching styles attributes namely, Expert, Formal Authority, Personal Model, Delegator and Facilitator Style.

This was done because the investigators felt that the items chosen adequately represent the targeted teaching styles attributes.

Section C was constructed accordingly by the investigators in order to answer the research questions of the study. Aspects on each item in section B match those in section C. The only difference between the two sections is that each item in section C begins with ‘I prefer .....’.

## Results and Discussion

*Research Question 1: What are the students’ perceptions of their lecturers’ teaching styles?*

Table 1 Students’ Perceptions of Lecturers’ Teaching Styles

Teaching Style	N	Mean	SD
Expert	175	4.29	0.53
Formal Authority	175	3.86	0.54
Personal Model	175	4.06	0.62
Facilitator	175	3.91	0.68
Delegator	175	4.00	0.59

Table 1 displays the results of students’ perception with regard to the teaching styles of their lecturers in the English language classroom. However, based on the mean score, it is found that the lecturers preferred to use Expert Style (mean = 4.29, SD = 0.53), Personal Model Style (mean = 4.06, SD = 0.62) and Delegator Style (mean = 4.00, SD = 0.59) as compared to the Facilitator Style (mean = 3.91, SD = 0.68) and Formal Authority Style (mean = 3.86, SD = 0.54). The most dominant teaching style perceived by the students in their English class was Expert Style while the least dominant teaching style was Formal Authority Style.

The respondents generally perceived that all of the five teaching styles in Grasha’s Model (1996) were present in the polytechnic classrooms. The findings drew attention to dimensions of teaching styles’ diversity that might be present in Polytechnic classrooms. This is parallel with Grasha’s (1994) argument that apparently all college teachers possessed each of the teaching styles to varying degrees.

In this study, the three dominant teaching styles of the lecturers were identified as Expert, Personal Model and Delegator Styles. This is consistent with Grasha’s (1994) findings that college teachers were inclined to blend a few teaching styles to make a statement of "who I am as a person" and they also help to create a particular mood or emotional climate in class.

Grasha (1994) identified four teaching styles *clusters* consisting of: Cluster 1 (expert/personal model), Cluster 2 (expert/personal model/formal authority), Cluster 3 (expert/facilitator/personal model) and Cluster 4 (expert/facilitator/delegator). The results of this study demonstrated a combination of dominant teaching styles of Expert, Personal Model and Delegator Styles that was not consistent with any of the combinations in the four clusters identified by Grasha's (1994) study. The difference in the blend of styles is normal according to Grasha (1994) as stated in Roslind (2003) that college teachers' teaching patterns were influenced by several factors like learning goals, type of course, class size, subject matter, level of studies, learning period, learning institution norms and academic discipline.

The most dominant style of teaching as perceived by the students in this study was Expert teaching style. This finding suggests the traditional lecture-style of teaching is dominant in the polytechnic English language classroom. The finding is not surprising considering the majority of the lecturers were not degree holders of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) teaching (based on Report on the English Language Syllabus Evaluation 2005), thus they lacked experience in teaching ESP syllabus in the polytechnic. This is consistent with the findings of Stimpson & Wong (1995) that teachers were inclined to avoid more pupil-centered approach, possibly for fear that they might put themselves in a classroom situation they would find difficult to cope with; they often feel more comfortable with a more structured and somewhat rigid style in which they can control the teaching pace.

*Research Question 2: What are the students' preferences of lecturers' teaching styles?*

Table 2 Students' Preferences to Lecturers' Teaching Styles

Teaching Style	N	Mean	SD
Expert	175	4.22	0.54
Formal Authority	175	3.95	0.61
Personal Model	175	4.30	0.55
Facilitator	175	4.35	0.56
Delegator	175	4.23	0.59

Table 2 displays the data on students' preference for their lecturers' teaching styles in the English language classroom. Based on the mean score, it is found that the students preferred their lecturers to use more of Facilitator Style (mean = 4.35, SD = 0.56), Personal Model

(mean = 4.30, SD = 0.55) and Delegator Style (mean = 4.23, SD = 0.59) as compared to the Expert Style (mean = 4.22, SD = 0.54) and Formal Authority Style (mean = 3.95, SD = 0.61). The most dominant teaching style preferred by the students was Facilitator Style while the least dominant teaching style was Formal Authority Style.

The results demonstrated that the respondents would like all of the teaching styles in Grasha's Model (1996) to be used by their English language lecturers. Among the five, the teaching style most preferred was Facilitative Style, while the least preferred was Formal Authority Style. These findings suggest a preference for a learner-centered approach to teaching, indicating the personal nature of teacher-student interactions. In the Polytechnic, the skill-oriented ESP module demands a certain level of coaching on behalf of the lecturer to ensure desirable learning outcomes. This corresponds with the results of studies that reported preference for learner-centered approach in English classes which were related to higher grades, a greater sense of accomplishment, and greater overall satisfaction (Miglietti & Strange 1998).

*Research Question 3: Is there a significant difference between the **male and female** students perceptions of their lecturers' teaching styles?*

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the perception scores for male and female students. The data in Table 3 below indicated no significant difference between male and female students' perceptions for all teaching styles. Both genders perceived similar pattern of the lecturers' teaching styles.

Table 3 t-Test Results for Male and Female Students' Perceptions with respect to their Lecturers' Teaching Styles

Teaching Style	Mean of Males	Mean of Females	t	p- value
Expert	4.29	4.30	-0.160	0.87
Formal Authority	3.85	3.87	-0.253	0.80
Personal Model	4.02	4.10	-0.868	0.39
Facilitator	3.82	4.00	-1.714	0.09
Delegator	3.97	4.03	-0.700	0.49

\*Significant at confidence level  $p < 0.05$

*Research Question 4: Is there a significant difference between the male and female students' preferences to their lecturers' teaching styles?*

The independent samples' t-tests results shown in Table 4 below indicated no significant difference in preference between the male and female students for all styles tested namely Expert, Formal Authority, Personal Model, Facilitator and Delegator teaching styles.

Table 4 t-Test Results for Male and Female Students' Preferences with respect to their Lecturers' Teaching Styles

Teaching Style	Mean of males	Mean of females	t	p-value
Expert	4.30	4.15	1.76	0.08
Formal Authority	3.94	3.97	-0.32	0.75
Personal Model	4.31	4.30	0.18	0.86
Facilitator	4.35	4.35	-0.08	0.99
Delegator	4.21	4.25	-0.47	0.64

\*Significant at confidence level  $p < 0.05$

There were no significant differences between the male and female students' preferences for all teaching styles. However, male students reported somewhat higher mean scores on Expert, Formal Authority and Personal Model Styles, but lower mean scores in Facilitator and Delegator Styles as compared to their female counterparts. Thus, these characteristics suggest that male students prefer to have more of "lecturer-assisted" styles of teaching in their English language classes. This is consistent with Beishline & Holmes (1997) study which reported that males showed a greater preference than females for lecturer-assisted class discussion.

*Research Question 5: Is there a significant difference between the students' **perceptions and preferences** with respect to their lecturers' teaching styles in terms of Expert, Formal Authority, Personal Model, Facilitator, and Delegator Styles?*

Table 5 t-Test Results for Students' Perceived and Preferred Teaching Styles

Teaching Styles	Variables	N	Mean	SD	t value	Deg. of freedom	Sig. (2-tailed)
Expert	Perceived	175	4.29	0.53	1.800	174	0.074
	Preferred	175	4.22	0.54			
Formal Authority	Perceived	175	3.86	0.54	-2.277	174	0.024
	Preferred	175	3.95	0.61			
Personal Model	Perceived	175	4.06	0.62	-5.033	174	0.000
	Preferred	175	4.31	0.55			
Facilitator	Perceived	175	3.91	0.69	-9.729	174	0.000
	Preferred	175	4.35	0.56			
Delegator	Perceived	175	4.00	0.59	-5.641	174	0.000
	Preferred	175	4.23	0.59			

\*Significant at confidence level  $p < 0.05$

### *Expert Style*

The results in Table 5 indicated that there was statistically no significant difference in the mean of preferred Expert teaching style (mean = 4.22, SD = 0.54) as compared to the perceived Expert teaching style (mean = 4.29, SD = 0.53),  $t(174) = 1.800$ ,  $p = 0.074$ . This means that the respondents would like their English language lecturers to use the Expert teaching style just as much as what the lecturers' had been practising.

### *Formal Authority Style*

The results in Table 5 demonstrated that there was a statistically significant difference in the mean of preferred Formal Authority teaching style (mean = 3.95, SD = 0.61) as compared to perceived Formal Authority teaching style (mean = 3.86, SD = 0.54). The preferred Formal Authority Style's mean score is higher than the perceived Formal Authority Style's mean score. Results from the t-test showed that the t-value is - 2.277 (df 174) and the p-value is 0.024 ( $p < 0.05$ ). This means that the respondents would like their English language lecturers to use more of the Formal Authority teaching style than what the lecturers had been practicing.



### *Personal Model Style*

The results in Table 5 indicated that there was a statistically significant difference in the mean of preferred Personal Model teaching style (mean = 4.31, SD = 0.55) as compared to perceived Personal Model teaching style (mean = 4.06, SD = 0.62). The mean score of preferred Personal Model style is higher than the perceived Personal Model mean score. Results from the t-test showed that the t-value is  $-5.033$  (df 174) and the p-value is 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ). This means that the respondents would like their English language lecturers to use more of the Personal Model teaching style than what the lecturers had been practicing.

### *Facilitator Style*

The results in Table 5 indicated that there was a statistically significant difference in the mean of preferred Facilitator teaching style (mean = 4.35, SD = 0.56) as compared to perceived Facilitator teaching style (mean = 3.91, SD = 0.69). The mean score of preferred Facilitator Style is higher than the mean score of perceived Facilitator Style. Results from the t-test showed that the t-value is  $-9.729$  (df 174) and the p-value is 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ). This means that the respondents would like their English language lecturers to use the Facilitator teaching style more often than what the lecturers had been practicing.

### *Delegator Style*

The results in Table 5 indicated that there was a statistically significant difference in the mean of preferred Delegator teaching style (mean = 4.23, SD = 0.59) as compared to perceived Delegator teaching style (mean = 4.00, SD = 0.59). The mean score of preferred Delegator Style is higher than the mean score of perceived Delegator Style. Results from the t-test showed that the t-value is  $-5.641$  (df 174) and the p-value is 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ). This means that the students would like their English language lecturers to use the Delegator teaching style more often than what the lecturers had been practicing.

In sum, the students' perceptions and preferences differed significantly in all teaching styles of Grasha's Model (1996) except for Expert teaching style. The results demonstrated statistically significant higher in terms of preferences to Formal Authority, Personal Model, Facilitator and Delegator styles. The findings suggest the students favoured a more Formal Authority, Personal Model, Facilitative and Delegative teaching styles than what their English language lecturers have been practicing in the English language classroom. The obvious pattern drawn from the results was the students would like not one but various teaching styles

to be incorporated in their English language classrooms. The lecturers therefore should adopt several teaching styles so that they can appeal to a greater variety of students. Grasha (1996) suggests using varied teaching styles to address the diversity of learner needs. Vaughn and Baker (2001) also suggest that using a variety of teaching methods and styles ultimately may encourage adaptability and lifelong learning in teaching-learning process. The ability of the lecturers to adapt to different if not all teaching styles is crucial so that more students could benefit from their teaching. Vaughn and Baker (2001) also promote that adaptability to all teaching styles is an important tool that prepares teachers for a variety of teaching conditions where we can appeal to a greater variety of learners.

In the aspects of Expert teaching style, there was no significant difference between the students' preferences and perceptions. This reflects that the degree of Expert style that has been performed by the English language lecturers was just right as like what the students wanted.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The three teaching styles most prevalent among the English language lecturers were Expert, Personal Model and Delegator styles. Expert and Personal Model teaching styles are teacher-centered in nature. Meanwhile, the most preferred teaching style stated by the students was Facilitator style which is very much student-centered in nature. This implies that the lecturers should adopt more of student-centered approaches in their teaching. In doing so, lecturers need to carefully plan their lessons by incorporating more student participations in the classroom activities and at the same time making sure they are there to facilitate the students.

The students' preferences for Formal Authority, Personal Model, Facilitator and Delegator styles are significantly higher than their perceptions in terms of their lecturers' teaching styles. This means that the students want more of these styles to be used by their lecturers than what the lecturers are practicing presently. The English language lecturers should therefore, vary their teaching styles to a higher degree towards these teaching styles to accommodate the majority request of these students. Grasha (1996) cautioned that modifying one's teaching was not as easy as picking and choosing among elements in each of the four clusters he identified. Each demands that the lecturers have or are willing to acquire the skills to use those methods. Thus, the lecturers must be willing to build relationships with the students and to teach them how to work effectively together. Finally, the students need the capability to learn in new ways and the lecturers must be willing to teach them how to do so (Grasha 1996).

The results revealed no significant differences between the male and female students perceived as well as preferences with respect to their lecturers' teaching styles. These findings suggest a positive input towards the considerations and planning of the teaching styles to be adopted in the classroom by the lecturers in the study. The English language lecturers in the study need not worry about gender differences and thus focus on other factors such as various activities appealing to the students relevant to the preferred teaching styles stated by them.

The Ministry of Higher Education should play a role in for the betterment of the English Courses in the Polytechnics. Conducting a survey research to identify teaching styles of the lecturers and then sending them for ESP courses may equip them with necessary ESP skills to teach with more confidence. Seevers (1995) in her study, recognises the importance of identifying teaching styles. She suggests understanding and recognizing differences in teaching style can help individuals and the organization make decisions about the personal and professional development of employees. The typical two-day short course is not sufficient to even grasp what ESP is all about. Having said that, what the lecturers need is a more comprehensive and wholesome program that will be more beneficial in the long run.

Further research into teaching styles is recommended as this issue can be approached from many different perspectives. The current study was based solely on students' perspectives. A similar study on comparisons between students' and lecturers' perceptions in the aspects of teaching styles could also be conducted. In order to make generalizations applicable to other MOHE polytechnics, this study could be carried out using samples from all of the 14 MOHE polytechnics in Malaysia. Similar studies involving ESP-trained and ESP-untrained lecturers are highly recommended in which the comparisons will provide a better picture of the real teaching styles scenario of the English language lecturers in the polytechnics.

There are a lot of contributing factors towards students' learning in the classroom. The lecturer's teaching style is one of the many factors that need to be considered when researching students' learning. This study suggests lecturers should be made aware of what teaching styles their students prefer in order to make the teaching and learning process more effective. The awareness of their own teaching styles as well as the preferred teaching styles of the students may make them realise the crucial role it plays in their teaching.

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